



MERIDIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

2019 Legislative Review



Business Friendly • Community Connected • Family Focused

2019 Legislative Summary

The 2019 Legislative Session saw many positives for our business community. We applaud the hard work and dedication of our local legislators and their commitment to the business community and our state. The Meridian Chamber was pleased with the Legislators level of funding for education and their commitment to our schools and educators. This session saw our Legislators pass positive occupational licensing reform that will allow more veterans and workers enter the workforce to fill pressing needs in the business community. The Chamber is pleased that an interim committee has been established with regards to the school funding formula in order to better study the issue.

The Meridian Chamber would have liked to have seen legislation brought forth that would allow all communities across Idaho to have local-option taxing authority. The Chamber is also worried about the administrative sideboards that were included with the funding of Medicaid of expansion. The Chamber is concerned that unintended administrative expenses and costs will hinder Medicaid expansion. The Chamber was disappointed that the Legislature passed legislation further restricting how urban renewal districts can operate. Although the Chamber was happy with the Legislators commitment to transportation, the Chamber had hoped that more effort would have been placed on finding alternative means to funding transportation to help alleviate traffic congestion. This session saw great support for CTE skill training programs that fill important needs in our community.

2019 Legislative Priorities Info Card

The status of our priorities in this report is meant to show how the chamber's priorities were impacted during the 2019 Idaho Legislative Session. They do not necessarily reflect the interests or actions of regional legislators. Instead, they are meant to reflect how actions and legislation during the 2019 session impacted these priorities. To learn more about the Chamber's legislative priorities, please visit meridianchamber.org.



Completed



In Progress



No Progress

Status

Transportation

Transportation is crucial to Idaho's economy and further delays will not only strangle Idaho's economic vitality but will result in passing the problems to future generations. Accordingly, the Meridian Chamber of Commerce supports the following projects and funding mechanisms for transportation infrastructure.

- Capacity improvements to Highway 20/26 west of Eagle Road to reduce congestion, improve safety, and create economic opportunity -----
- Construction of Linder overpass at I-84 to provide additional arterial north/south access to the city -----
- State Highway 16 Extension/Central Valley Expressway -----
- Using a multi-faceted approach for finding funding sources including registration fees, fuels taxes, and other user fees -----
- Support the continuation of investigating other means to fund alternate transportation without negatively impacting the General Fund -----

Economic Development

The Meridian Chamber favors legislation that creates jobs, reduces regulation on businesses, encourages businesses to grow and prosper, and makes it easier for businesses to provide goods and services for our citizens and trade.

- Support the Tax Reimbursement Incentive and its efforts to stimulate economic development -----
- Support the exploration of local based incentives -----
- Support local option tax authority and mechanisms for funding infrastructure associated with new growth including impact fees -----
- Support legislation that improves access to liquor licenses for restaurants while working to maintain the value of legacy liquor licenses -----

Education

The Meridian Chamber supports efforts to expand the capabilities of our K-12 schools to graduate all students with the necessary skills to successfully complete college and/or career/technical education (CTE), including emphasis on Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM). State supported colleges and universities need to provide the relevant curriculum and the trained workforce required if Idaho businesses are to effectively compete in the global marketplace.

- Support recommendations of Governor's Education Task Force to implement 5th year of the career ladder funding formula -----
- Support a mechanism for Idaho schools by which new growth contributes to the building needs associated with student enrollment -----
- Support expansion of CWI's Canyon County and on-line campuses -----

The Meridian Chamber supports measures that enhance the amenities of our community to make Meridian a great place to live, work, and raise families.

- Support the reduction of the “super majority” requirement to a 60% approval rate for the passage of local bond issues -----
- Protect the ability of communities to utilize Urban Renewal and Auditorium Districts -----
- Support efforts to limit annexation by one City into another City’s Areas of City Impact without prior consent -----
- Support legislation to expand electrical inspection certification in Idaho -----



Healthcare

The Meridian Chamber supports limited government involvement in the healthcare system and a reduction in the mandates that are placed on employers.

- Support implementation of Proposition 2 language that expands Medicaid to eliminate any gap population and makes services available to residents -----
- Support efforts to fund substance abuse treatment programs -----



Looking Ahead to 2020

The Meridian Chamber of Commerce is already working with local officials and business leaders in preparation for the 2020 Idaho Legislative Session. The Chamber hopes that next year’s session will look at additional ways to fund transportation to help address growth in our communities. The Chamber is hopeful that the issue of local-option taxing authority will be discussed and that legislation will be put forward. The Chamber is always supportive of legislation that creates tools that pave the way for economic development in the region. The Chamber expects that in 2020 there will be a renewed discussion regarding the school funding formula and will monitor that issue carefully.

We anticipate a myriad of issues being addressed in future legislative sessions. We feel it should be valuable for our Legislators to again address the liquor licensing laws in Idaho. Education funding will continue to be a priority for the Chamber and our community.

Meridian will continue to be the fastest growing community in Idaho with the largest school district in the state. We will continue to work with legislators to find ways that the State can help pay for the construction and expansion of schools in our community to meet growth needs. The 2019 session saw more than 500 bills introduced and 320 bills that passed both chambers. We expect to see another busy session in 2020 and truly appreciate all the hard work that our legislators put in.



Special Thank You!!!

The Meridian Chamber wants to thank all those who attended our coffee with the legislators during the 2019 Idaho Legislative Session. A dedicated group of Chamber members and Legislators met at 6:30 am bi-monthly during the session to discuss issues that directly impact business in our community. We want to especially thank those Legislators who took time out of their busy schedule to meet attend these meetings during the session:

- Senator Chuck Winder
- Representative Tom Dayley
- Representative Mike Moyle
- Representative John VanderWoude
- Representative Joe Palmer
- Representative Jason Monks



If you are interested in learning more about the Chamber’s advocacy programs, please visit www.meridianchamber.org or contact the Chamber directly at 208-888-2817. You can also email the Chamber at info@meridianchamber.org.

